GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
RAILWAYS
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:6270
ANSWERED ON:12.04.2017
Review of Catering Facilities
Singh Shri Sushil Kumar

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government proposes to review the catering facilities in the railways and if so, the details thereof;

(b) whether it is a fact that passengers are charged compulsorily while booking ticket for providing meals/snacks in Rajdhani or Shatabdi trains whereas Airlines are giving option to passengers for taking food/snacks;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) whether passengers in the railways travelling by Shatabdi or Rajdhani are proposed to be offered the option to avail the meals/snacks; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS
(SHRI RAJEN GOHAIN)

(a): Yes, Madam. New Catering Policy has been notified on 27th February, 2017 with the objective to provide quality food to rail passengers by unbundling of catering services on trains. Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation Limited (IRCTC) has been mandated to carry out the unbundling by creating a distinction primarily between food preparation and food distribution. In order to upgrade quality of catering services, IRCTC shall be setting up new kitchens and upgrading existing ones. New catering policy, inter-alia, includes the following features for unbundling of catering services (i) IRCTC shall manage catering services on all mobile units. (ii) Meals for all mobile units will be picked up from the nominated kitchens owned, operated and managed by IRCTC. (iii) IRCTC will engage service providers from hospitality industry for service of food in trains. (iv) IRCTC shall not outrightly outsource or issue licenses for provision of catering services to private licensees. IRCTC shall retain the ownership and shall be fully accountable for all the issues pertaining to setting up and operation of the Base Kitchens and quality of food.
(b) & (c): Yes, Madam. Premier long distance trains like Rajdhani/Shatabdi/Duronto Express trains have limited number of short stoppages at important stations. Therefore, in order to mitigate passenger difficulties in buying food from Railway stations and provide variety of quality food to passengers in such a short span of time, catering charges are historically part of the total ticket fare since introduction of these premium trains.
(d) & (e): A trial of optional catering services to passengers was conducted on two trains- Train Number 12954-53 August Kranti Rajdhani and Train Number 12025-26, Pune- Secunderabad Shatabdi Express for 45 days i.e. from 7.10.2016 to 20.11.2016, wherein passengers were given the option to 'opt out' from the mandatory food facility. The catering apportionment charges were excluded from the total ticket fare for travel during the above period for passengers opting out. 5.15% of passengers opted out of mandatory catering services on the above two trains during the trial period. In order to provide more options to travelling passengers e-catering services have been started where passengers can book food of their choice at market driven prices through internet/SMS/Mobile App. At present, station based e-catering services are available at 357 A1 & A category stations. Further, proliferation of this service is being ensured through IRCTC on the remaining 51 A1 & A category stations.

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